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Statement on Latest Actions in Phillips v. Archdiocese of Newark et al

June 29, 2017

The following is a statement from James Goodness, Vice Chancellor and Director of Communications for the Archdiocese of Newark.

In her most recent filing in this matter, the attorney for the plaintiffs states that "no one is above the law."

Yet, to date, every step that the plaintiffs have taken, every statement they have made, shows that they do not believe their own attorney's words.

The plaintiffs have demonstrated clearly and strongly that, in their minds, the rules and laws of St. Theresa School and Parish do not apply to them.

For them, rules may be fine for other parents and students in the St. Theresa community, but not for them; everyone must treat them and their children differently.

St. Theresa School is the education ministry of the parish of St. Theresa in Kenilworth. At the heart of this education ministry is a 63-year old tradition of collaboration among parents, students and

school administration, working together to foster Gospel values and provide a nurturing academic and moral environment. Parents embrace these rules in order to serve the best interests of all of its students. Ask all the other parents at St. Theresa, and you will learn that these rules work.

The plaintiffs' actions threaten to shatter this nurturing environment. Through their lawsuit and subsequent actions the plaintiffs have created intimidation and fear in parents, school officials and, yes, students. Indeed, the plaintiffs have announced to the world that they do not accept St. Theresa's collaborative approach to a Catholic education.

That said, we need to ask the question: "If the plaintiffs do not wish to abide by the rules; if they do not wish to embrace St. Theresa's long-held educational philosophy; and if they are, as only they contend, the recipients of such injustice, then why do they persist in forcing their children to attend St. Theresa School?"

What's more, the plaintiffs have sought to use the court to attack and silence scores of parents in the St. Theresa community who, because they love St. Theresa School, have spoken out in support of its goals and the way it is run. How can such attacks foster collaboration?

We can only surmise that the plaintiffs wish to impose their own rules on the community, and replace collaboration with diktat.

The Archdiocese and St. Theresa Parish and School continue to urge the court to recognize the bad behavior of the plaintiffs, dismiss this case, and allow St. Theresa School, its faculty, parents and students to begin a new school year in September without the disruption that the plaintiffs' continued presence surely will cause.

The Archdiocese of Newark is not in the business of excluding kids from school. Quite the contrary: parents, teachers, administrators and benefactors make serious sacrifices to carry out this vital area of our mission. The issue is not, and never has been, sports. It is the serenity of a school community. Only a grievous threat to the well-being of our teachers, students and families would justify such an extraordinary measure.

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